



NEWS RELEASE

NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NEMA) – 2433 NW 24th STREET – LINCOLN, NE 68524-1801

Joint Information Center (JIC)

Daily Update

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South Platte River Has Crested at North Platte

LINCOLN, Neb. – Continued caution is urged for anyone in the area of the South Platte River as river levels could remain at higher levels throughout September.

“We are asking people to be cautious near the South Platte and Platte Rivers as this water moves through the state,” said Nebraska Emergency Management Assistant Director Al Berndt. “Local emergency managers across the affected areas are working with area responders to prepare and respond to issues that arise.”

In **Lincoln County** “All the defenses we installed have really done what they were supposed to do, said Lincoln County Emergency Management Director. “Our Sandbagging, our earthen berm-building and our warning people to get out of low-lying areas has been effective. Communities have really rallied together.

Once floodwater begins to recede, there will still be public health and safety concerns from contaminants that might still be in the floodwater. This includes standing water that remains. Check the UNL Extension and Department of Health and Human Services section below for links to important information.

In **Buffalo County** officials are preparing for flooding as water in the South Platte moves into the Platte River.

Buffalo County Emergency Manager Darrin Lewis said he and staff are providing information on rising water along the Platte River to individuals who live and work along the river. They are distributing fliers and would like residents to make sure their neighbors are also getting the information.

He reports the forecast for the Plate River in the Buffalo County and Kearney Areas show that the water will be arriving Tuesday evening. Flood stage is expected Wednesday with a crest of 6.9 feet is on Thursday morning. Peak Flows should last at least 24 hours staying at flood stage for five to seven days. The expected peak flows are 12,000 CFS.

“Johnson Lake and Elwood are now going to take as much water and as quickly as they can so that should help,” Lewis said. “In addition, Nebraska Public Power District has started taking as much as they can handle upstream through the NPPD canal. Every little bit helps.”

Times for the Elm Creek area would be adjusted 12 hours forward. The Gibbon, Shelton area can adjust 12 hours later.

The sections below, and others, will be included in the daily release sent by NEMA for the duration of this event.

NEMA

A NEMA field team of six and the NEMA Mobil Operations Center is positioned at North Platte to work with local emergency managers as water rises along the South Platte River. NEMA is collocated with the Nebraska Department of Roads Incident Management Team Trailer and Nebraska State Patrol Mobile Operations Center.

The State Emergency Operations Center continues to operate at NEMA's headquarters in Lincoln. NEMA staff is assisting the public and officials along the South Platte River respond to the flooding, and providing information to the NEMA field team. Also working closely with NEMA staff are several state agencies including, Nebraska National Guard, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Environmental Quality, State Fire Marshal, Nebraska State Patrol and Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission.

University of Nebraska Extension

The University of Nebraska Extension assembled a variety of written and video resources in response to Missouri River flooding in 2001 that can be found at <http://flood.unl.edu>. The resources provide research based information and education to the citizens of Nebraska. The material addresses issues related to homes, water wells, septic systems, farms, home landscapes and family financial and emotional stress.

Nebraska State Patrol

The Nebraska State Patrol reminds motorists that the floodwater has displaced wildlife along the river. Motorists should pay extra attention when traveling in the affected areas as wildlife, especially deer, could be seeking high ground and crossing roadways.

The Patrol also wants to remind motorists to be on the lookout for road closures and large equipment on roadways due to flood related work.

National Weather Service:

For current information on river gauges and levels use this web link:

<http://water.weather.gov/ahps/region.php?state=ne>

National Guard

Four Nebraska National Guardsmen in two Humvees have responded to the South Platte River area to support local emergency operations. National Guard Soldiers are working with the NEMA field team collecting information in the flooded area.

Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR): <http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/511/9-2013-flood/info.pdf>

Road Closures:

I-80 STATEWIDE is OPEN.

The L25B from I-80 north to Big Springs is **closed**.

The L51B link from I-80 north to Roscoe is **closed**.

The L51A link from I-80 to Brule is currently open, but NDOR is monitoring a surge in flow, and the link may have to be closed again depending on the surge.

NDOR will continue to monitor areas as the flow continues to move downstream.

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality urges people to avoid contact with floodwaters. The public is cautioned about contact with water in the river, standing pools or backwaters which could be contaminated.

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) has activated its flood webpage at:
<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/flooding.aspx>

Private water well owners in soon-to-be-flooded areas should take precautions to prevent their drinking water from being contaminated. Well owners should take the following steps if they believe their well will be impacted:

- Before taking the well out of service, store a supply of clean water
- Disconnect the power supply for the well. Consult a Nebraska-licensed well driller or pump installer if help is needed
- Perform actions necessary to make the well water-tight, including removing the well vent and replacing it with a water-tight plug, and sealing any visible joint openings with water-tight caulking or equivalent material

Tetanus Shots for People in Flooded areas

Tetanus immunization is recommended for all adults every 10 years. Exposure to floodwaters doesn't increase the risk of tetanus according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, if you get a severe wound or deep cut, check with your health care provider to see if you need a booster. Tetanus is an infectious disease, but it's not spread from one person to another. The bacteria that cause tetanus are found in the soil and usually enter the body through a wound. The infection is very serious and will involve a long hospital stay. Surviving tetanus disease doesn't create immunity. The only way to guarantee future protection is through immunization.

State Fire Marshal

State Fire Marshal staff is in the field monitoring the effects of rising water on propane storage and other fire hazards.

American Red Cross

As the water from Colorado flows into Nebraska, more than a dozen American Red Cross disaster action workers from North Platte, Kearney, Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha continue to prepare for potential flooding in communities along the South Platte River.

Red Cross workers have met with Southern Baptist and UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and are working closely with the Salvation Army Partners. In addition, the Red Cross is positioned to open shelters in nine communities along the South Platte River, should homeowners be forced out of their homes. Shelters will provide displaced residents with a safe place to stay, a place to sleep, a hot meal, minor first aid, referrals and a shoulder to lean on.

Shelter App: People can locate a shelter by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., or downloading the Red Cross Shelter App.

Anyone evacuating to a Red Cross shelter should bring essential items for each member of the family:

- Prescriptions and emergency medications
- Foods that meet unusual dietary requirements
- Identification to show residence is in affected area and important personal documents
- Extra clothing, pillows, blankets, hygiene supplies and other comfort items
- Supplies needed for children and infants, such as diapers, formula and toys
- Special items for family members who are elderly or disabled

www.redcross.org

Salvation Army

A North Platte Salvation Army emergency disaster services team is ready to help and another team from Kearney is on standby. Disaster services range from distributing food and clothing, to providing counseling and support, and sometimes even providing temporary shelter. <http://www.usc.salvationarmy.org/western>.

Oregon Trail Baptist Association

The Oregon Trail Baptist Association out of North Platte is also available to provide meals as needed.



[List of County Emergency Managers](#)

[List of Nebraska Local Health Departments](#)

For flooding information visit: <http://www.nema.ne.gov/newsroom/flooding-information.shtml>